

Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

MINUTES

February 20, 2013, 4:30 PM

Members Present: Chair Eric Weis, Jef Nickerson, Matthew Moritz, Jenn Steinfeld, Jenna Yu

Staff: David Everett, Sheila Dormody

Guests: Bill DeSantis, VHB (Bike Providence Master Plan consultant)

1/ Bill DeSantis - Bike Providence Master Plan update:

Bill said that input on preferred routes has been received, primarily via the website set up for that purpose, and recorded – this work will be finalized in upcoming weeks. He also reported that there were problems with the bike route app (allowing riders to record their routes) and it has since been upgraded with more file size and should be fully functional (via smart phones. Bill then passed out copies of a map showing this preliminary input. He reported on a memo sent to Providence DPW regarding the road paving program and preferred “purple” streets designating those preferred for shared lane markings (Prairie, Potters, Melrose, and Olney for this round. Bill also reported that the report text is well underway regarding education, encouragement, and policy and should be submitted in one to two weeks.

Discussion followed regarding “contra-flow” (in the opposite direction of automobile traffic) bike lane possibilities, specifically on Camp Street by Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School , where the

street is shut down to north-bound traffic during specified hours.

Attendee Ken Orenstein spoke about the need to conduct a sign inventory and address the many signs that are in conflict.

“Block the box” issues were also discussed: the need for greater enforcement and more signs, as well as a change of culture. It was noted that this is something that can be emphasized in the bike plan.

Another brief discussion followed regarding whether or not bike lane/sharrow graphics could continue through intersections. No definitive answer was determined.

Attendee Zak Drapkin raised the issue of separated cycletrack possibilities. Bill DeSantis said that the second round of road paving might present possibilities and that intersection safety would be an issue.

Sheila Dormody asked Bill about mid- and long-range plans since the emphasis of the plan to date has been on short-term actions and the road bond. Bill said mid- and long-range actions would be included but specific location input for proposed improvements would be necessary to do so. He cited input on the possibility of a cycletrack on Canal Street.

Matt Moritz inquired about possible bikeway improvement opportunities associated with the viaduct project. Bill replied that all bridge repairs have the potential option of addressing bicycle improvements.

2/ Snow Issues:

Eric Weis reported on Serve RI's volunteer network snow removal program and raised the issue of how BPAC might offer support.

Jef Nickerson said that in his assessment the City did pretty well overall during and in the aftermath of the past large snowstorm. He said that, while "common sense gaps do exist," they generally can't be addressed legislatively. Jef also gave "props" to the Downtown Improvement District (DID) for its work during and after the storm. Eric opined that RISD and Brown did well too.

Meeting attendee Nancy Tierney of Rhode Island Housing said that there were problems with sidewalk snow removal around the State House.

Ken Orenstein spoke of the need to engage merchant groups to address issues around bus stops. A discussion followed about Lamar-owned bus shelters and whether the company is only responsible for clearing inside the shelters themselves. BPAC will look into their contractual responsibilities and whether the next contract can be amended to broaden snow-clearing responsibilities.

Sheila Dormody said that the Hope Street Business Association was using peer pressure rather than enforcement to address snow clearing.

3/ Communications:

Jef discussed the new google group.

4/Cross walk "Beg Buttons":

Jef spoke of issues with the "beg buttons" that pedestrians are

required to push in order to activate a “walk” signal, and a brief discussion followed. Eric said he would write an advisory letter against them to both Providence DPW and RIDOT.

OTHER BUSINESS:

5/ RIPTA COA:

Jef addressed the RIPTA Comprehensive Operational Analysis and the need for public input from BPAC. He suggested reading comments on the Greater City Providence (GCP) website.

6/ AASHTO:

The AASHTO national conference will be held in Providence May 3-7. BPAC should consider giving a tour or otherwise getting involved. Eric said he would be putting together RI’s proposed segment of the US Route 1 bicycle route for the conference.

7/Cyclovia Providence:

It was decided that Katuska Perez and Gonzalo Cuervo of the Mayor’s Office should be invited to the next BPAC meeting.

8/Ellen Cynar:

New staff of the City of Providence Healthy Communities Office was introduced to the board.

9/ Bike Day/Week:

Bike Day aligns with the national Bike Day May 17 and may also coincide with completion of the City's Bike Plan.

10/ KP event:

Jef said he would invite BPAC members and staff to an upcoming Kennedy Plaza event.

11/ Met School:

A bike shop is in the works at the Met.

12/ PASA:

Providence After School Alliance (PASA) is starting a bike shop at Nathan Bishop Middle School.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted by David Everett